

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

January 16, 2020

Mr. Ford called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Bob Ford (Chair), Scott Markow (Vice Chair), Lynda Earle (Vice Chair), Kui Zhao, Joan Hash, Peter Hwang, Bianca Chang, Leslie Salgado-Tamayo, Mabrooka Chaudhry, Joshua Kaufman

Student Present: Musa Jafri

Staff Present: Chaunta Taylor (Recording Secretary), and Yolanda F. Sonnier (Executive Secretary)

Legal Counsel Present: Melissa Goldmeier

Public Forum: Kui introduced, Ms. Meg Boyd, Executive Director of Howard County Conservancy. Ms. Boyd shared information about the Howard County Conservancy and informed the Commission of their upcoming 30 anniversary.

Bob asked, what is the difference between HC Conservancy and the Robinson Nature Center? Ms. Boyd replied, they are part of Howard County, Recreation and Parks, we are a non-profit and Robinson Nature Center have a lot of indoor programs and our programs try to get kids more outside. If we have inclement weather, we will go inside but mostly we are outside and, on the trails, at the streams, and at the soil pit. There isn't a huge difference between us but that is a little bit of a difference.

Leslie asked, is the program open to adults or mostly children? Ms. Boyd replied, yes, we mostly work with the children, but we do have several programs geared towards adults as well. Leslie responded do you work with individuals with different languages, Ms. Boyd responded, yes, and we are working with FIRN.

Linda asked, are you working with the YMCA, Ms. Boyd responded no not at this time.

Yolanda stated I am sure you have a lovely facility and hearing that you are trying to get more involved in the community. What if we had a project that we wanted to have at your facility that would reach more diverse communities. If possible, can we work together with you on the event? Ms. Boyd responded, absolutely. Yolanda asked, do you have a business card? Ms. Boyd, stated yes, they are on the table. Yolanda stated thank you, we will connect.

Bob thanked Ms. Boyd for coming.

Commission members **approved** unanimously the **November 14, 2019** and **December 19, 2019** (with Scott's correction) at the **January 16, 2020** meeting.

Yolanda asked what the correction was to the December minutes, Scott responded, Melissa wasn't present at the December 19, 2019 meeting.

Reports

CHAIR:

Bob thanked Hector Garcia for his years of service with the Human Rights Commission and wished him well. Next issue up for discussion is with Hector resignation we have 1 vacant position. He asked Yolanda if she knows if CEX (County Executive Office) will do another press release or if they could use the most recent cadency list. Yolanda stated, she will follow up with CEX and inform the nominating committee. Bob then discussed the MLK upcoming event and asked the commissioner if they are available please attend it's always a great event. Lastly, he addressed a reconsideration hearing

being brought forth to the HRC and asked for 2 commissioner volunteers and confirmed availability. Joan Hash, Joshua Kaufman and Leslie Salgado volunteered. A commissioner asked what's the protocol for a reconsideration, Bob stated he's not sure if we ever had a reconsideration. Yolanda gave a brief rundown and why it was being brought to HRC. It was confirmed that the reconsideration meeting will be held on January 31, 2020 @ 1pm in room 212 attendees selected were Joan Hash, Joshua Kaufman (Commissioners), along with Bob Ford (Chair), Melissa Goldmeier (HRC Legal Counsel), and Yolanda Sonnier (OHR Administrator) and the Complainant. Leslie Salgado will be on standby just in case one of the commissioners were unavailable to attend.

Executive Secretary Report:

Yolanda discussed the following:

- Upcoming events
 - LGTB workgroup had their first meeting on Tuesday
- Administrator Tech position has been filed
 - Heid Tilkens coming from the Office of Law and she's bilingual in Spanish and she starts on Tuesday
- Open position for Part time Outreach Coordinator
 - Will be posted February 24, 2020
- Translation of OHR Brochures for the Lunar New Year celebration @ Columbia Mall 1-3pm
 - Thank you, Bianca, for assisting with Chinese brochure
 - Thank you, Young Smith with LOKA with Korean brochure
 - Thank you, Kui for volunteering with Trent Hall, (Outreach Supervisor) to work the table
- Kwanzaa Event
 - Thank you to all the commissioners that came to support the event
 - Thank you, Joan for working the registration table
 - Event was talked about in the Baltimore Sun
 - CEX was very pleased with the event
- MLK Celebration
 - Sunday, January 19, 2020 reception starts at 2:pm, program starts at 3pm
- HBI's reported
 - None for the month of December
- NAACP Freedom Fund Bruch
 - May 2, 2020 @ Arundel Preserve
 - Office may get a table if interested please let us know
- Human Rights Day in Annapolis
 - Any commissioners planning on attending in February 21, 2020

Yolanda ended with any questions, Commissioners inquired about the following:

Joan asked for more information on the Black History lunch and learn

Yolanda responded, it will be held at the Elkrigde 50 plus center and Trent Hall the Outreach Supervisor will be attending the event. It's a lunch and learn focus on exploring the Black experience within the content of American history, systems, institutions, and culture with the intention of creating space for authentic connection and genuine understanding. It's free to the public and it's from 12-2pm.

Leslie, what is CIT Training?

Yolanda responded it's a training for Police Officers and she will need to check to confirm if it's open to the public.

Joan, the Courageous Conversation is held at different locations?

Yolanda responded you wanted to know the location

Joan stated, just curious just in case I wanted to attend one

Joshua asked what is COVE?

Yolanda responded, OHR Compliance Officer, Mary Campbell is the Chair of COVE and COVE is made of different partners throughout the community and a lot of the Human Rights agency and her Co-Chair is out of Baltimore County. They meet monthly and plan events. They had a conference where they addressed a lot of issues such as, Hate Bias, Legislation and Bystander intervention. They also have representative from the Police Dept., and the Sherriff Office. Bob stated that's he is on that committee and it's a small organization that has been around for 30 something years, they don't have a lot of money, but they meet the 1st Tuesday of every month.

Bob stated, it doesn't have to be addressed at tonight's meeting but would like to understand the complainant filing process that goes through the Office of Human Rights. I am interested in the timeline and what's expected of the investigators because we always see complainants complain about the investigators. Yolanda asked the Retreat Chairs; do you think having this discussion at the retreat is appropriate or will the February meeting be a better time? Joshua stated the retreat agenda is already packed so maybe not at the retreat. Yolanda stated to Bob she will address all the questions that were asked and present them at the February meeting. Yolanda added although it will be addressed at the February meeting, we do have complainants that are satisfied. We recently sent Ms. Evelyn Boulware the Office Manager of OHR to mediation training and through her training she has mediated 6 cases and 5 were resolved.

Retreat Preparation Discussion:

Joshua asked to have a brief discussion about the agenda and any proposed questions to give to the facilitator. Yolanda stated Trent Hall, the Outreach Supervisor will be facilitating the retreat, he also facilitated the LGBTQ workgroup. Joshua asked if the retreat committee could have a meeting to discuss with Trent what the day would look like. Yolanda stated she will connect the committee and Trent by email to set up a meeting.

Joshua asked the commission: Can we discuss and prioritize the 3 objectives for discussion at the retreat.? We should prioritize them because we all may have different visions. Scott stated we need to discuss the subcommittees. Joshua replied we should wait until we confirm priorities, Leslie agreed, we should establish our priorities around our goals. With having new commissioners, we should establish a vision as well. Peter stated vision should be the #1 objective. Joshua stated then we will have 4 objectives, is everyone comfortable with having 4? Joan chimed in and stated when discussing goals, the committees should be discussed. Joshua agreed yes, we should discuss the committee with the goals. Yolanda asked the committee to keep in mind you have 4 hours you need to account for breaks and lunch when establishing time on the agenda. Mabrooka suggested that the commission take home the drafted agenda and if they had any questions or comments to email the retreat committee.

The committee asked will the retreat be held at the Patuxent Woods location, Yolanda stated yes and if you haven't already please sent Chaunta any dietary restriction for lunch. The commission asked, Yolanda will you be at the retreat, yes, I will be there since I am the Executive Secretary of the Human Rights Commission and that's why I decided not to facilitate. Joshua asked if we needed notes and is this considered an open meeting? Yolanda replied, yes, Chaunta will be there taking notes as Recording Secretary of the Human Rights Commission, the open meeting question will need to be addressed with you HRC attorney. Melissa stated she wasn't sure she doesn't think so but will need to look into it and let them know. Joshua expressed he wasn't comfortable with having people work on Saturday, Yolanda stated it wasn't an issue and after the committee speaks with Trent let us know what supplies are needed if any. Leslie asked when conducting certain activity, what happens if we need legal advice as far as goals? Melissa stated that's not necessary something you would need legal advice, goals, and vision that's more policy. Leslie stated I guess if it does come up we could ask the question at a later day. Melissa stated that would work.

Bob asked anything else to add, will everyone be at the retreat, the commissioners responded yes.

Committees Reports Please review reports prior to the meeting. If you have any questions regarding the reports submitted, please bring your questions to the meeting. (**Reports submitted)

LGBTQ Workgroup:

Bob, we had a meeting on January 14, 2020, I represented HRC and this is the first workgroup under Calvin Ball Administration. Member of the community, representative of organizations participated. The CEX kickoff the session with open remarks, the workgroup is under the Office of Human Rights with Yolanda Sonnier leading the way. Janssen Evelyn, Assistant Chief Administrator Officer, he is the go between for CEX. In the meeting we established vision, goals and purpose. They are also creating a Facebook that will be out soon.

This Saturday will be Gay Day @ Savage Mill from 5pm - 1am it's a fundraiser for HOCO Pride, it's a family friendly event and everyone is invited. Yolanda stated she asked if the event is family friendly the entire time or does it change around 10pm, she was informed no it's family friendly the entire time.

Yolanda stated just to go back the LGBTQ workgroup meets on a quarterly basis and the next 3 meeting are already set and it's open to the public, the next meetings are April 15, 2020, July 22, 2020, December 15, 2020. The workgroup had discussed different activity that will be a benefit to the community, either by educational programs or social activities.

Fair Housing:

Lynda, two things to report on MIHU (Moderate Income Housing Unit) it's a program under Dr. Ball's Administration creating opportunities for families that may not be able to live in this area. There will be a series of workshops that families can register, the dates are: January 9, 2020, January 15, 2020 and January 23, 2020. The workshops are free and open to the public. Secondly, is the debate issue with Anne Arundel County on the Fair Housing Law. There was a proposal that landlords and property owners be permitted to consider occupation in terms of allowing people to rent and buy property, some of the occupation are Law Enforcement, Public Service, Fire Fighter, Emergency Medical Providers. The bill was amended to include Officers and Deputy Sheriffs, it has been brought up that this issue may be discriminatory. The rational is to allow people that can't afford to live in certain district be able to, they work there but they can't afford to live there. However, there are people on the Council that recognize that this could be considered discriminatory. It's currently tabled for further research.

Yolanda, asked so depending on their occupation they are given preferential treatment?

Mabrooka stated, there are some complexes in Howard County that give service workers discount on their rent, she was given a discount when she first moved to the County because she is a Howard County public school teacher. Joan asked, did you have to present documentation, Mabrooka responded, yes, my paycheck. Leslie asked was that based on your income? Mabrooka stated no it was based on your occupation.

Linda stated, that concluded her report.

Legislation:

Kui, said she didn't see anything active on the County level and asked Leslie if she had anything to add. Leslie responded no only thing that we met and now I have a better understanding.

HRC Awards:

Bianca, met with Yolanda and nailed down a proposed date of April 16, 2020 and Yolanda confirmed that CEX is available on that date. They came up with 3 places to house the event. The nomination final vote will be March 13, 2020. Nomination will be submitted by PDF; the deciding vote will be done the same way as last year. Yolanda stated nomination will be open February 1, 2020, it will run 6 weeks for nominations.

Aging/Disability/Healthcare:

Bianca, I submitted a couple of pages, there are a lot of resources please send to workgroup for people to get healthy.

Yolanda stated going back to the Award Committee, Hector was on the committee with Bianca, since he has resigned we only have Bianca on the committee. If another commissioner wants to join in on the committee it would be good. Leslie responded we will be having this discussion at the upcoming retreat. However, I am willing to help. Yolanda responded she has met with Bianca at least 3 times in the last month and she's trying to lighten Bianca's load. Lynda stated she is willing to assist as well.

Immigration Special Status:

Joan, we did our first round of interviews and Leslie is focusing on anything happening in Maryland. Next step is to continue research and more interviews as suggested, we are still waiting for data. The committee will discuss the format of our report by phone. We anticipate completion of our committee's report by the end of March and report to the commission at the April 2020 meeting.

Joshua asked are you anticipating the report will include recommendations? Joan responded we will discuss it collectively as a group and then we will agree what is the proper solution.

Bob, anything else to add before we move forward.

Musa stated that there is a meeting online with County Council on a discussion with ICE it's dated January 13, 2020.

Student Report:

Musa, I have a meeting with Director of History for Howard County next week

New Business/Announcements:

- Lynda, I am out of the country next week, so I may be slow in responding to emails
- January 25, 2020 @ 10am African American of Howard County @ Saint John's Church

CLOSED SESSION:

- Case HRC#19-12-001- OHR# 2019-07-04

Commission members **approved** unanimously going into close session.

Meeting Adjourned for Closed Session: 8:20pm

During closed session, Commission members voted to affirm the OHR decision

Meeting Adjourned: 8:54pm